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THE BAPTIST

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

(see pages 6-7)
Cooperative Program Day, April 20

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

APRIL 17, 1997

VOL. 121

No. 11

USM BSU enjoys mission spring break

Spring break 1997 began a day early for the 22 members of the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Baptist Student Union (BSU) mission team to Guatemala.

Because of flight schedules and airfares, the group left on Thursday afternoon from New Orleans for the five hour trek to Guatemala City.

This was the second consecutive year the USM BSU has gone to Guatemala to help with Southern Baptist mission work.

Unlike 1996 when the work focused on helping the Christian Academy of Guatemala, this year's experience gave many hours of contact with nationals. The BSUs worked with Southern Baptist journeyman Robin Reid and several Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) career missionaries.

Helen and George Hardeman were the supervisors for the week.

After arriving on Thursday evening, Helen gave the group a brief orientation and helped the BSUs get settled into the mission guest house, The Arkansas House.

Helen has been working several years with the Word of Life Baptist Church and their youth ministry.

She explained that the BSU group would be involved in many different activities during



LEADING OUT IN MISSIONS — Members of the mission team from the Baptist Student Union at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg prepare for their mission trip to Guatemala City, Guatemala. A total of 22 Mississippi students were part of the annual mission trip. (BR special photo).

the week, with a focus on strengthening and encouraging the youth group of the church.

The ministry week began on Friday. Helen and several members of the church led a prayer walk through the community.

Prayers were offered for the

area and that God would bring young people into the church. Children ran out to meet the BSUs and join in the singing and playing.

The BSUs returned every afternoon with puppets, clowns, and sports events to draw children and young people into relationships and direct them toward the church.

After a quick trip to Antigua on Saturday morning, the group was divided into three teams to

help three churches and three SBC missionary couples.

Every member of the team had been alerted in training sessions to be ready at all times to do anything that was needed. That certainly was put to the test on Saturday and Sunday.

Clowns, puppets, basketball, music, and every other method imaginable were called upon as children came from everywhere.

Each missionary was amazed at how adaptable the students were at crossing the barrier of language.

One of the many highlights of the week was Yoshi Fujii, a Japanese international student, singing "Because He Lives" in English, Japanese, and Spanish.

In addition to the work with the people and churches in Guatemala, the BSUs also helped the mission by painting inside and outside the mission guest residence where they were staying, once again proving that it doesn't take highly skilled people to be involved in working as mission volunteers.

It took a great deal of patience for the missionaries in Guatemala to work with the BSU group — at least as much paint went on the Arkansas house as on each other.

God continues to bless the USM BSU ministry as more students were introduced to missions. Two from the 1996 mission group have been appointed to serve as Southern Baptist missionary journeymen for the 1997-99 term.

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Mall outreach is new ministry

Southern Baptists need to adapt to the needs of today's service-oriented generation, according to Robert Griffis, founder of Mall Ministries of America.

"Today's shift to a more service-oriented economy has brought about changes in work schedules and needs for today's church to address," said Griffis, speaking to participants at the Southern Baptist Home Missions Board's "Touch a Life Ministry Conference" April 3-6 in Atlanta.

Citing Col. 1:29 as the basis for his ministry, Griffis provides a worship experience for the store manager convenient to his/her schedule, within the shopping mall community.

"To begin a mall ministry, you need to start with a prayer-walk," Griffis said. "All events crucial to spreading the gospel are preceded by prayer."

Griffis said the other steps in beginning a mall ministry are to recruit a core group by first developing witnessing relationships with one or two retail managers in the mall; identifying fellow Christians who work in the mall and encouraging them to get involved in the ministry; and through developing ministering and witnessing relationships in the mall, beginning to build a core group upon which future ministries will be based.

"The key to making a mall ministry work is relationship building," Griffis stressed. "You have to build the relationship to earn the right to minister to the need."

Looking back

10 years ago

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board votes to drop its long-standing requirement that career missionary candidates attend one of the six SBC seminaries for at least one year. The new policy opens the door to qualified candidates from non-SBC seminaries.

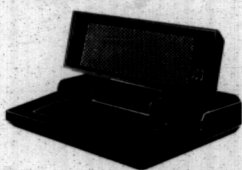
20 years ago

Clarke College trustees elect S. L. Harris of Ft. Worth as the school's new president. He succeeds W. L. Compere, who has headed the school since 1955 and was named president-emeritus by the trustees.

50 years ago

Transition from war to peace is reflected in the reports of 26,401 churches in their 1946 annual associational meetings. The return of servicemen from overseas resulted in record gains in church membership, Sunday School, and Church Training enrollment.

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**Postmaster: Send changes of address
to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box
530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send
news, communication, and address
changes to The Editor, BAPTIST
RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS
39205-0530 (601) 968-3800**

VOLUME 121 NUMBER 11
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per
year payable in advance. Economy plans
available for cooperating Mississippi
churches. Periodicals postage paid at
Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State
Baptist Papers.

American Christians must make a difference

Living as a Christian in America can be hard. Living as a Christian elsewhere can be deadly.

That's a fact often overlooked by many (if not most) American Christians, whose two greatest concerns on a given Sunday are the temperature of the sanctuary and where to eat after church.

It's not so in the rest of the world.

While our children learn Bible lessons in the comfort and security of air-conditioned preschool classes, children of Christians in the north African nation of Sudan are sold starving into Muslim slavery after their parents are murdered before their eyes — all for the unforgivable act of professing Jesus Christ.

At the very moment we stare threateningly at the pastor when he goes ten minutes over his allotted sermon time, Chinese pastors are being beaten by government authorities, forced to stand in chest-deep sewage for days, and routinely left for dead on roadsides — all for the unpardonable decision not to be part of the official government-run church in that communist country.

We fail to notice the dozens of attractive churches we pass in our rush to the Sunday soccer game, while believers in communist North Korea can't find a single place to worship because the Christian church has been exterminated.

Americans can be intimidated into not praying in public, at the same time Christians forced underground in Muslim theocracies are gathering at great personal risk for a few precious minutes of prayer time together.

Every generation of Christians has faced the real possibility of paying an ultimate price for their faith.

Jesus understood and did his best to explain the costs involved in following him (Matt. 10: 16-22, 34-38).

It is exceedingly obvious that today's American Christians are the exception to the deprivation, hardship, and ever-looming threat of death that has existed for Christians for 2,000 years.

Why has God spared us from the customary fate of Christians throughout history? There is little doubt that God has set us apart for his work in a special way.

He inspired the Founding Fathers to enshrine freedom of religion and speech at the very core of our nation's existence, enabling us to worship and evangelize as God leads.

Even though our freedoms have been bought at a high price on battlefields around the world, God has protected our own shores from invaders who would impose false religions or atheism at point of a gun.

God has given us an economic system that cannot be matched in the history of the world; he has made us the heathiest people ever; and he has given us the technological and financial means to go anywhere on the face of the earth and even beyond.

Yet Americans as a society seem intent on bringing down all of God's wonderful plans for us at a time when religious persecution around the world calls out for a response from us.

American Christians find themselves in the position of fighting a rear-guard action on the homefront, while still attempting to fulfill the Great Commission.

Satan's fingerprints are everywhere, and it's easy to get discouraged.

"I LOVE MY CHURCH. IT'S A MARVELOUS INFLUENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY. SOME DAY I ACTUALLY PLAN TO START ATTENDING."



Now is not the time to conclude that all is lost. Now is not the time to give up in frustration and timidity.

The battle for the souls of men is nearly 2,000 years old, and it seems as if it has only just begun.

God expects American Christians — every single one of us — to make a difference in his Kingdom work.

That's why he has put us here, in this time and this place.

The stakes are high, the battle is joined, and there will be casualties.

We can be assured, however, that we are on the winning side (Matt. 24-6-14).

GUEST OPINION:



Thank God for Cooperative Program

By Mary Frank Kirkpatrick, member
Noxapater Church, Noxapater

Iam grateful for this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Baptists of Mississippi for what they have done for me personally.

I had already graduated from Blue Mountain College, taught school in Holly Bluff, received my Masters in Religious Education degree from Southwestern Seminary, and was youth director at First Church in Minden, La., when I knew in my heart that God was calling me to go to Nigeria as a missionary.

I had not saved enough money to buy my ticket to New York — much less to cross the ocean, build a house, have money for food and clothes, a car, and equipment with which to work — but I knew I did not have to worry because I grew up in Noxapater Church, Noxapater.

I remembered the many times I had heard my pastor talking about the Cooperative Program.

I knew my fellow Baptists would join together and buy my ticket; and provide the house and car; and a salary for whatever my needs would be.

During the 25 years I spent in West Africa, my mind would

often flash back with gratitude to Mississippi.

I remember the day Adebayo Ojelade stated his desire to become a Christian.

When he first came to our Bible class, he told me he was a Moslem and was not interested in being a Christian, that he was only curious as to why I was coming to his school every Sunday afternoon.

I had prayed fervently, his "curiosity" had grown, and now he was ready.

In my heart I thanked God for Blue Mountain College for the training I received, and for one particular day during my senior year when someone

cared enough to lead me to a firm assurance of my own salvation that resulted in a deep concern for the salvation of others.

Today Ojelade is the internist and acting administrator for the Baptist Medical Center in Ogbomoso and is teaching a Sunday afternoon Bible study in a high school there, seeing many come to know Jesus as he did.

After I graduated from Blue Mountain in 1947 I worked at Camp Garaywa, its first year.

Oh, how I thank God for Camp Garaywa and for the many summers I spent there.

Only Heaven will reveal the many young girls who have

come to know Jesus there, and have become sensitive to his call to Christian service.

One night during the summer of 1950 I was sitting on the steps by the flag pole, once again praying, "Teach me to do thy will for thou art my God."

It was not hard for me to tell the GAs to be obedient to his leading, but the time had come for me to leave my teaching position and follow him to the seminary which would ultimately lead me to Africa.

My experiences at Garaywa prepared me to open a Baptist Student Center in Ibadan, a city of about 1 million people with many schools. Hardly a day passed without several coming to faith in Jesus.

I agree with David Michel, stewardship director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board:

"The Cooperative Program has been recognized as a spiritual insight from God propelling us into worldwide effectiveness."

I am grateful to Mississippi Baptists for being instruments in God's hands to help mold my life through their faithful support of the Cooperative Program.

SUNDAY • APRIL 20 • 1997

CELEBRATE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DAY

Clarke College homecoming set for April 26

Calvary Church, Newton, will be the April 26 site of Homecoming '97, a gathering of Clarke College (CC) alumni, former faculty and staff, and friends of the college.

Registration and class reunions will begin at 8:30 a.m., followed by alumni choir rehearsal led by Buddy McElroy, former CC choral director.

The alumni choir will perform at the 10:30 a.m. Homecoming Celebration, which will be keynoted by James Gilbert, a member of the 50-year anniversary class of '47 and a former missionary to Ecuador and Panama.

Also on the program are former CC Baptist Student Union Director J.B. Costilow and James Griffith, CC alumni association president.

The celebration will move to the grounds of the Alumni Center on the former CC property (weather permitting) for an old-fashioned picnic under the trees.

The memorabilia exhibits in Alumni Center will be open, and the afternoon will conclude with an alumni association business session.

Clarke College was the 85-year-old junior college in Newton affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC).

Messengers to the 1992 MBC annual meeting voted to close the school after several years of struggle with declining enrollment, financial difficulties, and accreditation problems.

A special MBC committee

was formed that year to dispose of the school's property.

Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice signed legislation March 27 to fund the state's \$1,000,000 purchase of the CC property.

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health plans to renovate the property and utilize it as a residential facility for adults under the department's care.

The 1992 MBC messengers also stipulated that a house and one acre of land be reserved from any potential sale of the property for use by the CC alumni association.

Reservations for CC Homecoming '97 are encouraged so that adequate meal plans can be made.

For more information and to make reservations, write to CC Alumni Association, P.O. Box 493, Newton, MS 39345.

CNN reporter visits MC



CNN REPORTER AT MC — Wolf Blitzer (right), White House correspondent for CNN in Washington, talks with Mississippi College public relations majors Stephanie Cranford (left) of Raymond and Rachel Taylor of Ruston, La., following his April 3 speech sponsored by the Student Government Association as part of the Arts in April series. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

APRIL 17, 1997

VOL. 121

No. 11

Baptist disaster relief responds to flood

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

Mississippi River flooding that displaced people from about 150 homes in Vicksburg brought the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Ministry into service March 27-April 17.

A new mobile kitchen, dedicated and put into service only last year, had its "shake-down" operation in Vicksburg at Highland Church, where Brian Ivey is pastor.

Disaster relief task force members have prepared about 1,200 meals through April 4. About 250 meals per day are being prepared.

The workers, volunteers from Baptist churches around the state, were moved to the Vicksburg city auditorium on April 5 and were expected to continue cooking meals for flood victims through April 17, according to Jim Didlake, on-site coordinator for Mississippi Baptist disaster relief and a consultant in the Brotherhood Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Highland Church, Vicksburg, also served as Baptist disaster relief headquarters after flooding in 1992 brought the disaster relief unit there for four days of meal preparation.

In Tunica County in northwest Mississippi, the American Red Cross estimated 50 families were displaced by Mississippi River flooding.

Mississippi Baptists on April 4-6 prepared approximately 400 meals from their base at First Church, Tunica, according to disaster relief volunteers Pat and Dave Selvy, lay members of First Church, Marks.

Joe Lusby is pastor of First Church, Tunica.

Southern Baptist national disaster relief coordinator Mickey Caisson of the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis said that massive snowmelt flooding in North

Dakota, South Dakota, and northern Minnesota has not yet resulted in a call for outside disaster relief units.

Caisson said officials are also closely monitoring the upper Mississippi and Missouri Rivers for potential flooding over the next several weeks in Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois.

Since Mississippi Baptists began disaster relief work in 1978, nearly 500,000 hot meals have been served to disaster victims.

The work has taken Mississippi volunteers to sites as close to home as the Mississippi Delta and Gulf Coast, and as

distant as California, Mexico, Charleston (S.C.), Haiti, and Russia.

On April 18-19, disaster relief task force members will attend training at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko on operation of the new mobile kitchen unit at Central Hills Baptist Retreat.

Approximately 110 men and 30 women are task force members.

For more information on Mississippi Baptist disaster relief operations, contact Didlake at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



MOBILE MEALS — Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force members Ronnie Ferrell (left) of Isola and Bobby Kennedy of Pearl Valley begin preparation of meals at the mobile feeding unit on the parking lot of Highland Church, Vicksburg, during recent disaster relief operations in Vicksburg. Mississippi Baptist volunteers prepare the meals, which are then delivered to disaster victims by the American Red Cross. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

Dallas hotel cancels SBC room block

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Six hundred rooms in a major Dallas hotel for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 17-19 have become unavailable.

The Wyndham Anatole Hotel in the Market Center area of Dallas announced recently that the rooms previously reserved under contract for the convention would not be available because of a scheduling conflict.

All persons who held reservations with the Wyndham Anatole hotel will be notified by phone, personally, and in writing of the change.

Questions may be directed to the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau Housing Office at (800) 792-1029 or to the SBC Housing Coordinator, Lynn Richmond, at (615) 782-8612.

Mississippi family soon heading to Russia

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

Russia. What was formerly a godless country is now wide open to the gospel, and a Mississippi family is preparing to walk through that door to ministry.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (FMB) has in hand more than 150 requests for additional career missionaries for that country, and the Kyzar family of Clinton will be instrumental in developing a strategy to deploy those missionaries.

Come June, Russell and Melinda Kyzar will transfer their field of missionary service from Costa Rica to Moscow, where Russell will be mission strategy facilitator.

The missionary family, which includes Ryan, born in 1979; Ross, born in 1983, and Robyn, born in 1989, has been assigned for the past ten years to Costa Rica, where they began as music promoters and — more recently — Russell has been strategy coordinator and Melinda has been bookstore manager.

The couple heard about the position in Moscow from Mississippians Dan and Libby Panter during a prayer conference last December.

Dan is FMB field associate director for Europe. After attending separate sessions for men and women, Russell and Melinda compared notes. "It

struck a chord in our hearts," said Russell.

"After talking with the Panthers, we thought, 'That can't possibly be for us.' It's just so immense — the hardships, having to sell everything we owned in Costa Rica because we could only take (to Moscow) what we could get in suitcases," Melinda said.

The Kyzars met later with the Panthers. "When Dan unrolled the map of Russia across his living room floor," said Russell, "we captured the enormity of the task and saw the opportunity to reach the largest country in land mass in the world."

Following proper FMB channels, the Kyzars applied for the transfer and were approved in February.

Ryan will stay and attend Mississippi College. The others will leave June 16 for Moscow.

Meanwhile, they are studying the Russian language with the Belarussian wife of a student at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, and from Charles Martin of Mississippi College, who learned Russian in the military.

The Kyzars' move involves changing from Spanish-speaking roles to Russian speaking; from being 1,500 miles from Mississippi to 7,000 miles away; and from being in the same time zone as Mississippi to nine hours ahead.

Their apartment in Moscow will be on the third floor of a



LEAP OF FAITH — The Kyzars, (from left) Ryan, Russell, Ross, Robyn, and Melinda, will soon be in Russia helping answer the urgent call for more missionaries to that formerly communist and atheist country. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

five-floor walk up building.

With typical missionary optimism, Melinda said, "This is good. It could have been the fifth floor."

Russell said his prayer has been, "Lord, this is too big a change to make without being absolutely sure you are in this."

The Kyzars believe the road to Moscow is the one God wants them to travel.

In early December, Melinda, daughter of retired FMB missionaries Guy and Lois Henderson of Clinton, found a verse in their devotional read-

ings: "The Lord will make you go through hard times but he himself will be there to teach you and you will not have to search for him any more. If you wander off the road to the right or the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying, here is the road, follow it" (Isa. 30: 20-21 TEV).

Friends ask why they are making the move.

"We still ask that ourselves," said Melinda. "We don't know why God asked us to do this, but we are confident this is what he wants us to do."

Asthma claims teenager

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — Benjamin Ray Perkins, 16-year-old son of Ken and Beth Perkins, died early Easter Sunday, March 30, in Nairobi, Kenya, during a severe asthma attack.

Ben, a student at Rosslyn Academy in Nairobi, suffered the attack about 1:30 a.m. and died on the way to Gertrude's Garden Children's Hospital, despite two injections of medication and attempts to resuscitate him.

"Ben was a leader in his class, a fine student and an outstanding Christian young man," said a friend of the family.

The young man recently told his mother that after college he wanted to return to Kenya as a journeyman to teach at Rosslyn Academy.

Ken and Beth Perkins are engaged in relief and development work in east Africa from a base in Nairobi.

A funeral service was conducted April 5, in Nairobi, with burial in a cemetery there next to two other "missionary kids" who died on the field.

Ben is survived by his parents; two brothers, Jeremy and Jesse; his maternal grandparents, Jesse and Elva Stricker of Louisville, Ky.; and his paternal grandfather, R.C. Perkins of Owenton, Ky.



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*meal provided free



Beverly Sonnier

The training will be led by Beverly Sonnier, former Minister of Christian Education of Paramount Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., and current Associate Minister. She has served as a Youth and Single Adult Consultant for the D.C. Baptist Convention, and continues to serve as Youth and Children Consultant, and Writer for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

A native of Stockton, California, Sonnier holds a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice from San Jose State University and a master of divinity from Howard University School of Divinity.

For more information contact Larry Salter or Dick Brogan
at 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

Sponsored by the Sunday School Department and the Mission Extension Associational
Administration Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Vestal: CBF giving decline 'temporary'

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Daniel Vestal, coordinator for the National Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) was the keynote speaker at the spring general assembly of the Mississippi CBF on April 5 at University Church, Hattiesburg.

Dick Allison, pastor of University Church and Mississippi CBF moderator, also spoke.

Approximately 150 Baptists from across the state registered for the meeting, the largest state CBF gathering to date.

Vestal assumed leadership of the seven-year-old organization in December 1996 after 27 years in the pastorate — the last five as pastor of Tallwood Church in Houston, Tex. He succeeded Cecil Sherman as CBF moderator.

Vestal, defeated in a run for president of the Southern Baptist Convention at New Orleans in 1990, called a meeting in August of that year that resulted in the launching of CBF in 1991.

In the afternoon question and answer session, Vestal, in response to a question about the nature of CBF, said that "functionally, practically, CBF is a denomination. It is a place of fellowship, cooperation and missions."

"CBF is not a convention," he added. "It does not receive messengers, own institutions, or have the political structure of a convention. CBF is functioning as a denomination in a non-conventional way," he said.

Vestal observed that the vast majority of CBF people are still tied to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) family in some fashion.

Concerning the recent plateau in giving to the national CBF, Vestal said he believed the decline to be a temporary set back.

He also noted that giving to the Global Mission offering continues to be strong.

In Vestal's first days as national coordinator, the coordinating council was forced to revise the annual budget of \$14.1 million down by 10% for the year because of a shortfall in revenue.

Vestal spoke of how churches can relate to the CBF in terms of a continuum.

"There are CBF open churches, CBF friendly churches, and CBF partner churches," he said.

"The relationship (with CBF) does not have to be an either/or; it can be a both/and," Vestal said. "The best thing we can do is cast our vision of who we are and invite others to participate."

Vestal urged the participants to focus on the mission and vision of CBF and not on the "war," a reference to the years of struggle in the SBC that precipitated the founding of CBF.

"We don't want to be another SBC," he said. "Constitutionally, we are a different animal. We are different in organizational approach, philosophy, in the way we see



CBF LEADERS MEET — Dick Allison (left), state CBF moderator and pastor of University Church, Hattiesburg chats with Daniel Vestal, National CBF Coordinator. (Photo by Carl M. White)

the Gospel, and the working of churches," Vestal said.

Vestal encouraged the audience to reach out to the younger generation.

"We are not going to convert young adults to the CBF by talking about the 'war' or by talking about Baptist principles.

"We must talk about missions and offer hands on mission experiences. Missions is the one area where we are attracting people," he said.

Regarding the future, Vestal said he is optimistic and enthusiastic. "I believe our organizational structure is suited for the 21st century. It gives me hope."

Prayers for Libya slated May 16-17

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists have set aside a 24-hour period beginning at 6 p.m. May 16 to pray for the Arabs of Libya, a people group that makes up nearly the entire population of the controversial nation in North Africa.

A resource kit to support the prayer emphasis is available from the Foreign Mission Board. Inside the kit are a video on Libyans, news coverage on Libya adapted from "The Commission" magazine and a prayer guide. The materials can be ordered by calling 1-800-866-3621 or writing to Customer Services, Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767.

FBC, Atlanta, makes move from downtown site

ATLANTA (BP) — First Church, Atlanta, held its last Sunday worship service in the 68-year-old downtown facility April 6.

All Bible studies and worship services will be held at the church's northside location beginning April 13.

"We're continuing the church's 150-year movement up Peachtree Road," said GERAL D. SPICER, administrative pastor.

"Next Sunday is Family Reunion Day because it will be the first time in five years our church family has worshiped in one location. We're anticipating a brand new day at First Church."

The 15,000-member church

has planned to move out of the downtown location for several years but has been unable to sell the 12-acre site.

Five years ago, the church began holding services at both locations.

"We will still maintain our ministries to the homeless in downtown Atlanta as well as to international and college students," Spicer said.

"Also, our Wednesday night service and administrative offices will remain downtown for some time."

More than 6,000 people attended Easter services at First Church this year, Spicer said.

The congregation has weath-

ered several difficult situations in recent years related to sale of the downtown property and challenges to the leadership of senior pastor Charles Stanley.

"We're having nearly 30 additions to the church every week. This has always been a visionary church and this move is repositioning us for the 21st century.

Our opportunities are unlimited at the new site," Spicer said.

The worship center at the new site, purchased 10 years ago, is a remodeled warehouse which will seat 3,000, according to Spicer.

The site offers nearly 250,000

square feet of space under roof which will be remodeled when the downtown property is sold, with added plans for a new auditorium.

Stanley's international broadcast ministry, "In Touch," will continue to be videotaped during the church's worship services.

La. high court rules on professors' suit

PINEVILLE, La. (ABP) — The Louisiana Supreme Court has refused to throw out a defamation lawsuit brought by four Louisiana College professors against conservative critics.

Defendant Leon Hyatt, head of the Louisiana Baptist Conservative Resurgency group, had sought to have the lawsuit dismissed on religious-liberty grounds.

The state's high court declined to review a ruling by Louisiana's 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals. That leaves standing a ruling by district judge Tom Yeager allowing the suit to proceed. Yeager said the suit did not violate Hyatt's religious freedom nor involve internal church matters protected by the First Amendment.

According to the "Alexandria Daily Towntalk," Hyatt's attorney said the next step would be to go back to the district judge and ask for dismissal on grounds that statements circulated by Hyatt and the group did not defame professors Carlton Winbery, Frederick Downing, James Heath, and Connie Douglas.

In their lawsuit, the professors maintain derogatory letters published and circulated in a 1995 pamphlet damaged their reputations.

The letters were circulated, they charge, in an attempt by conservatives to win control of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and Louisiana College at the state convention's annual meeting.



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Mechan/Lauderdale	\$ 1,899
Hebron/Webster	\$ 1,473
Tinsley/Yazoo	\$ 1,467
Bethany/Jasper	\$ 1,267
Liberty/Scott	\$ 1,253

GIVING CATEGORY: \$25,000 - \$39,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
New Hope/Webster	\$ 9,112
Berwick/Mississippi	\$ 8,218
Elon/Noxubee	\$ 7,183
Cornersville/Union County	\$ 4,743
Center Grove/Lauderdale	\$ 4,298
Antioch/Copiah	\$ 3,955
Wayside/Yalobusha	\$ 3,839
Sarepta/Franklin	\$ 3,641
Carson/Covington-Jeff Davis	\$ 3,432
Calvary/Scott	\$ 3,418

GIVING CATEGORY: \$40,000 - \$54,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
Wayside/Warren	\$ 8,446
Hebron/Panola	\$ 7,010
Center Ridge/Kemper	\$ 7,000
Lula/North Delta	\$ 6,786
Tula/Lafayette	\$ 6,594
New Zion/Simpson	\$ 5,153
Emmanuel/Gulf Coast	\$ 5,051
Coat/Simpson	\$ 4,981
Liberty/Carroll	\$ 4,915
Center Ridge/Clarke	\$ 4,789

GIVING CATEGORY: \$55,000 - \$74,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
Liberty/Pontotoc	\$12,549
Zion/Pontotoc	\$12,318
Sabougla/Calhoun	\$ 9,720
Black Jack/Yazoo	\$ 8,869
Myrtle/Union County	\$ 8,687
College Hill Heights/Lafayette	\$ 8,582
Temple Heights/Lafayette	\$ 7,910
Salem/Metro	\$ 7,899
Branch/Scott	\$ 7,472
Alexander Memorial/Washington	\$ 7,307

GIVING CATEGORY: \$75,000 - \$99,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
Cliff Temple/Adams	\$17,826
Summerland/Jones	\$16,883
Causeyville/Lauderdale	\$15,939
Sturgis/Oktibbeha	\$13,977
FBC, Anguilla/Sharkey-Issaquena	\$13,899
FBC, State Line/Wayne	\$13,361
Mt. Moriah/Calhoun	\$13,075
Faithview/Gulf Coast	\$11,661
Calvary/Newton	\$11,126
East Corinth/Alcorn	\$11,074

CP requires trust, cooperation

By David Michel
MBCB Stewardship Director

Although the Cooperative Program (CP) is a simple idea, its function requires complex processes.

Many Baptists think they understand it but often become confused by its intricacies.

CP is a financial channel through which church members may make one gift which supports all the missionary, benevolent, and educational work conducted by Mississippi Baptists and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

CP giving unfolds at several different levels:

◆ Individual believers must decide in their hearts what to give through their churches.

◆ Local churches determine what percentage of their offerings to allocate for CP ministries.

◆ The Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) receives CP gifts from local churches and accounts for their expenditures.

◆ The gifts are spent according to a budget planned and adopted each year by messengers to the MBC annual meeting.

Those messengers are chosen from the congregations of local churches.

The larger pie chart below depicts basic ministry divisions of the 1997 MBC budget.

◆ Almost 36% of Mississippi's CP gifts are shared with the SBC.

Our gifts, which should total more than \$8.5 million this year, are combined with gifts from 36 other state conventions to make up a \$150 million world missions enterprise.

◆ SBC messengers adopt a budget separate from our state budget. Like MBC messengers, SBC messengers are chosen from

local church congregations.

The smaller pie chart below indicates the basic SBC ministry divisions, and also shows the interrelationship between Mississippi and the SBC.

According to Baptist polity, states may not dictate to the SBC how to spend their gifts, nor may the SBC dictate to Mississippi how to spend ours.

However, if a church sends messengers to the state and the SBC annual meetings, they will have a voice and a vote in the financial planning processes of both bodies.

Baptist cooperation at its highest level requires a generous measure of trust in one another, and demonstrates a willingness to subordinate selfish desires to the larger network of the kingdom of God.

The churches listed on these pages represent the most courageous and cooperative among our 2,000 Mississippi churches.

They deserve our Christian esteem and gratitude.



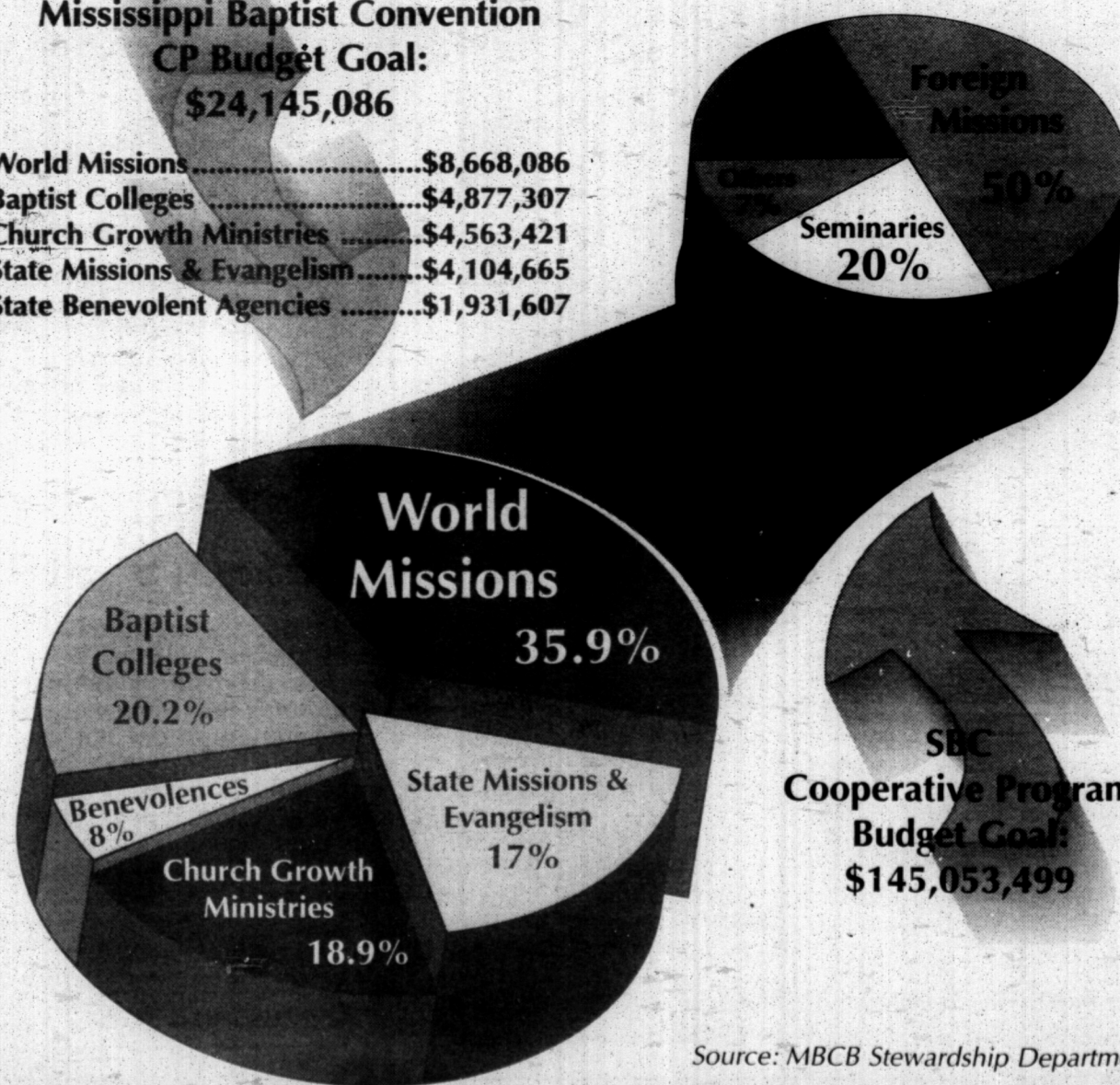
Michel

Mississippi Baptist Convention

CP Budget Goal:

\$24,145,086

World Missions	\$8,668,086
Baptist Colleges	\$4,877,307
Church Growth Ministries	\$4,563,421
State Missions & Evangelism	\$4,104,665
State Benevolent Agencies	\$1,931,607



Source: MBCB Stewardship Department

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DAY

Cooperative Program always top priority at First, Winona

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

First Church, Winona, is in the process of planning a new family life center. "We have the plans and the finance committee is working on how to facilitate the building," said pastor Johnny Walker.

What happens when fund raising efforts fall short?

Would First Church, Winona cut its Cooperative Program (CP) support?

Not a chance. "The church would choose to keep the CP percentage and not build the building," Walker said.

Aubrey Boone, chairman of deacons, and Shirley Pratt, financial secretary and widow of former pastor David Pratt, are in full agreement.

"The heart of the church is committed to the percentage of the CP," Walker said. That percentage is currently

32.5% of undesignated receipts, minus a monthly contribution to a long-standing building fund.

The 1997 church budget is \$476,699, according to Boone. Each week \$700 comes off the top to a building fund.

If these dollars are counted, then CP support is 29-30%, observed Boone, retired executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

According to church records, the CP percentage was 21% in 1971. It reached 30% in 1981. By 1984 they were at 31.5%. The current level of 32.5% was reached in 1988 and has remained at that level.

Strong CP support has a long history at First Church, Winona, according to Shirley Pratt. "The seeds were planted when the current leadership of the church was very young," she said.

Her husband, David, was pastor there from 1971 until his death in 1981.

Boone has been a member of First Church, Winona, since the early 1950s.

"Buck (C. B.) Hamlett was pastor when I came to Winona and he was a heavy promoter of the CP," Boone said.

The pastors since then have followed suit — John Green, Kermit McGregor, Jerry Mixon, David Pratt, and the current pastor, he added.

"When Bro. Pratt was here, he asked me to give a talk on CP. I did a study and found out that every year we increased our percentage, overall giving increased," Boone said.

"The one year we did not increase it, giving was static," he pointed out.

"I remember once serving on the pastor search committee," Boone said. "I asked the prospective pastor the CP question. He kept on hedging. Finally, I pressed the point. We didn't go back to that pastor," he added.

"It (Cooperative Program support) is the most important thing we do," Pratt said. "CP is always paid first. It has never been a question. We may



LEADERSHIP LEGACY — A hallway plaque honoring Arthur Flake, Southern Baptist Sunday School pioneer from First Church, Winona, is flanked by (from left) Aubrey Boone, chairman of deacons and retired executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation; Shirley Pratt, church financial secretary and widow of former pastor David Pratt; and Johnny Walker, current pastor. (Photo by Carl M. White)

have struggled, but it was in other ways," she said.

CP support has personal meaning for Pratt, whose daughter and son-in-law — Kathy and Clifton Curtis — are missionaries to Burkina Faso, off the coast of West Africa.

Walker has been pastor of First Church, Winona, since August 1990. "The three churches I pastored have all been strong supporters of the CP," he said.

At First, Winona, CP month is observed every April. "But more than that, for First Church, CP support is a way of life.

"I am proud of the church's deep commitment to missions, sharing Christ, and his love through CP. Here is a way we can be involved in world wide missions," Walker said.

"However, CP needs to be emphasized more," Walker added. "We have it as a way of life for us, we take it for granted. Young people need to be educated concerning the CP.

"It only takes one generation for the support to erode away."

GIVING CATEGORY: \$100,000 - \$149,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
Shiloh/Lawrence	\$ 31,542
Skene/Bolivar	\$ 27,548
Harmontown/Lafayette	\$ 25,280
New Prospect/Lincoln	\$ 25,237
Chunky/Newton	\$ 18,915
Sylvarena/Smith	\$ 18,310
Steep Hollow/Pearl River	\$ 18,280
Pleasant Grove/Wayne	\$ 18,016
FBC, Clara/Wayne	\$ 16,912
Calvary/Lawrence	\$ 16,684

GIVING CATEGORY: \$150,000 - \$249,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
Carrollton/Carroll	\$ 39,333
Central/Pike	\$ 38,702
Bunker Hill/Marion	\$ 35,105
West Ripley/Benton-Tippah	\$ 32,137
Noxapater/Winston	\$ 29,555
Derma/Calhoun	\$ 28,873
Barton/George	\$ 27,398
FBC, Glendale/Lebanon	\$ 26,168
Glade/Jones	\$ 25,885
Handsboro/Gulf Coast	\$ 25,260

GIVING CATEGORY: \$250,000 - \$499,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
Midway/Lauderdale	\$ 78,750
Prentiss/Covington-Jeff Davis	\$ 65,124
Highland/Warren	\$ 64,298
East End/Lowndes	\$ 56,550
FBC, Booneville/Prentiss	\$ 53,541
FBC, Calhoun City/Calhoun	\$ 52,250
FBC, Saltillo/Lee	\$ 45,178
FBC, Holly Springs/Marshall	\$ 37,915
Meadowood/Monroe	\$ 37,489
Wheeler Grove/Alcorn	\$ 35,745

GIVING CATEGORY: \$500,000 - \$999,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC, Winona/Montgomery	\$ 136,991
FBC, Batesville/Panola	\$ 131,694
FBC, Grenada/North Central	\$ 129,999
FBC, Amory/Monroe	\$ 122,103
West Heights/Pontotoc	\$ 117,958
FBC, Louisville/Winston	\$ 117,118
FBC, Corinth/Alcorn	\$ 105,937
FBC, Kosciusko/Attala	\$ 95,122
Poplar Springs Drive/Lauderdale	\$ 90,816
East Heights/Lee	\$ 74,130

GIVING CATEGORY: \$1,000,000 - and above

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC, Jackson/Metro	\$ 514,539
Broadmoor/Metro	\$ 390,777
FBC, Brandon/Rankin	\$ 321,288
Calvary/Lee	\$ 274,965
Temple, Hattiesburg/Lebanon	\$ 246,734
Colonial Heights/Metro	\$ 238,450
FBC, Columbus/Lowndes	\$ 217,047
FBC, Clinton/Metro	\$ 198,820
FBC, Yazoo City/Yazoo	\$ 195,421
FBC, Hattiesburg/Lebanon	\$ 157,922

JUST FOR THE RECORD



First Church, Pascagoula, held ground breaking services on April 6 for a new pre-school day care, young marrieds, senior adult, and single adult facilities in the amount of \$3,115,400. Pictured (from left) are Rex Yancey, pastor; Mitch McNabb, chairman, building committee; E. J. Smith, chairman of deacons; Clark Stewart, contractor; Bobby Lynn, Sarah Holder, Mavis Clark, committee members; Ethel Louise Trehern, chairman of trustees; Bettie Grantham and Bud Phillips, committee members; Moreno Jones, church member and representative of Hancock Bank, the loaning institution for the project. Harvey Barton (not pictured), member of building committee. First Church pledged \$1,500,000 over a three year period through a Challenge to Build Campaign.

HOMECOMINGS

Silver Springs (Pike): April 27; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds, and afternoon singing service with His Praise; Lenny Miller, Traveler's Rest, S. C., guest speaker; Byron Wilkerson, pastor.

Damascus (Franklin): April 20; services, 10:30 a.m.; Howard Collier, guest speaker; lunch served following morning services; 1:15 p.m. special music.

Wesson, Wesson: April 27; services, 10:45 a.m. with lunch following; W. J. Hughes, speaker; The Bibletones in concert at 7 p.m.

Union, Puckett: May 4; 10:30 a.m.; noon lunch in fellowship hall; 1:15 p.m. singing; Markus Burnham, Mendenhall, speaker; Jasper Butler, Brandon, music; Brent Bozeman, pastor.

Kreole Avenue Church, Moss Point: April 20; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; afternoon service; Wilbur Hall, former pastor, speaker; Ken Chambless, pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Plainway, Laurel: April 20-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Knight, evangelist; Michael Gibson, music; Kent W. Megehee, pastor.

First Church of Byram (Metro): April 27-30; Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Steve Wilks, Memphis, evangelist; Rob Robbins, First Church of Byram, music; Carl Prewitt, pastor.

Benton, Benton: April 20-23; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Eddie Hamilton, director of missions, Metro Association, evangelist; Susan Clark, Jackson, music; H. Bryan Abel, pastor.

Liberty Hill (Panola): April 20-23; Kenny Digby, Fulton, evangelist; Harlan Fox, music; J. L. Bailey, pastor.

Spring Creek, Philadelphia: April 20-23; 7 p.m. nightly; Randy Isbell, Hopewell Church, Savannah, Tenn., evangelist; Wayne King, pastor.

Springfield, Carthage: April 20-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Wayne Edwards, director of missions, Lauderdale Association, evangelist; Steve Bath, Minden, La., music; Stan Tucker, pastor.

Carmel, Monticello: April 20-23; 11 a.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. nightly; Gary Bowlin, Brandon, evangelist; Shelley and Irene Johnston, music; Ted C. Bowlin, pastor.

First, Long Beach: April 20-23; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6

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Hillcrest Church, Jackson, tied for first place in the 6th and 7th grade church basketball league in Jackson. Shown, kneeling, are Brooke Lincoln, Melissa Prouty, Heather Johnson; standing, Nikki McClasky, Angela Grigsby, Melanie Keen, and Stefanie Taylor. Courtney Gray not pictured. Coaches are Tim and Kay Lincoln. John Taylor is pastor.

p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Chuck Register, New Orleans Seminary, evangelist; Russell Kyzar, missionary on furlough, music; Billy E. Simmons, interim pastor.

New Hope (Oktibbeha): April 20-24; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Gary Jackson, evangelist; Archie Chesser, music; Hulon Chaney, interim pastor.

Bay Vista, Biloxi: April 27-30; Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Dean Register, Hattiesburg, evangelist; Jeff Keeman, Milton, Fla., music; Jerry N. Watts, pastor.

Woodville Heights, Jackson: April 27-30; Sunday

worship, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon luncheon and 7 p.m. worship; Frank Gunn, Biloxi, evangelist; Rick Greene, Madison, music; Wayne Kimbrough, pastor.

Richmond, Tupelo: April 27-30; 7 p.m. nightly; Jimmy Russell, Longview Church, Belden, evangelist; Andy Russell, Endville Church, Belden, music; Sean Tutor Sr., pastor.

Palmer, Ripley: April 27-30; youth-emphasis revival; Sunday Night, Blue Mountain College BSU revival team; Monday night, James Lewis, New Albany; Tuesday night, Greg Warnock, Corinth; Wednesday night, testimony service; Don Wilson pastor.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

Palmer Church, Ripley, will celebrate its 80th anniversary and dedication service for the newly renovated sanctuary on May 4 at 1:30 p.m. The day will begin with regular morning services followed by lunch. The theme for the day will be "Echoes from the Past; Soundings into the Future." Don Wilson is pastor.

Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, will host "Winning Relationship-A Marriage Conference." Charles Lowery, pastor of Hoffman Church, Albuquerque, N. M., guest speaker, will discuss such topics as "Why you are so Normal and your Mate is so Weird" and "The Power of Words." The dates and times are May 2, 7-10 p.m., and May 3, 8:30 a.m. until noon. A fee of \$15 will include registration, materials, and childcare. Register by April 21 for child-

care. For further information or to register call the education office at (601) 956-5000.

First Church, Leakesville, is planning a homecoming on June 29. The history committee is trying to locate addresses and /or phone numbers of former staff and members. The committee would like pictures of families or letters citing any memorable event. The address of the church is P. O. Box 508, Leakesville, MS 39451 or call (601) 394-5124 or 394-2686.

Journey to the Cross, A Dramatical, Musical Presentation of the Life of Christ, will be presented at Broodmoor Church, Jackson. Dates and times are May 2, 7 p.m.; May 4, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and encore performance on May 5 at 7 p.m. For tickets and more information, call 366-8444



Poplar Springs Church, Newton, held its annual walk-a-thon in support of The Baptist Children's Village on March 2. Ronny Robinson, executive director of the Children's Village, shared with the church the needs of the children and the vision he had for the Village. A group ranging from age 3 to 65-plus collected \$2,721 to provide needed funds for the Village. Charles Bonner is pastor.

ext. 136. Jim Futral is pastor and Mike Harland is minister of music.

Alta Woods Church, Jackson, will celebrate its 50th anniversary on May 3-4. Activities on Saturday will include a reception, 2-4 p.m.; reunion choir rehearsal, 3:30 p.m.; and homecoming banquet, 7 p.m. (reservations required). Activities on Sunday are men's prayer breakfast, 7 a.m.; Bible study, 9:15 a.m.; worship service, 10 a.m.; and covered dish luncheon, 11:45 a.m. Frank H. Thomas Jr. is pastor. For more information, call (601) 373-2371.

First Church, Brooklyn, will celebrate its centennial and dedication of new sanctuary on April 27. High attendance will be held in Sunday School at 10 a.m. A special worship service has been set for 11 a.m., followed by the dedication ceremony, dinner on the grounds, and music celebration at 2 p.m.

Richmond Church, Tupelo, will sponsor a benefit on April 26. Included in the activities will be a singing at 6 p.m. with Gospel Ship, New Experience,

New Life, and Faithfully His. Sean K. Tutor Sr. is pastor. For more information, call Kim Tutor at (601) 840-2554 or 841-1304.

Wade Church, Pascagoula, held its 5th annual leadership banquet on March 15. The meal was provided by the Brotherhood. Danny Wildman and Bernice Pittman (pictured) were selected as the outstanding leaders for 1996 and each were presented with a Bible by the WMU. Steve Rudolph is president of the Brotherhood and Susan Barfield is president of WMU. W. L. "Bill" Barton is pastor.



First Church, Lake Washington, Glen Allan, held note burning services for renovation of its church building at a cost of \$170,000. Pictured (from left) are Jimmy McLendon, pastor; Tim Wilkins, chairman of deacons; and Lamar Dorris, trustee.



Wildman and Pittman



Shubuta Church, Shubuta, dedicated its new educational building on March 8. James Manning, pastor, presided over the dedication, anointing the doorways with water taken from the Jordan River. Sarah Stallings, 8, one of the newest members of the church, had the privilege of cutting the purple ribbon draped across the doorway. Shubuta Church, established in 1856 with 11 charter members, was honored to be included on the National Historic Register. Pictured (from left) are Manning; Pete Albritton; Nelson Waller; William Richardson; Percy Flash; David West; Roger Douglas, chairman, building committee; Mark Mason, chairman of deacons.

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FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Hold to sound teaching

Revelation 2:18-29

By Paul Blanchard

Christians should recognize the dangers in any teaching that condones idolatry and immorality. It is imperative that we recognize that false teachers can deceive and lead people astray.

Thyatira was the name of the city mentioned in Acts 16:14. The city was known for its expensive dyes, linens and for its trade guilds. Apollo, the sun god, was worshipped there. It is important to note that in verse 18, Jesus presents himself as the Son of God, identifying himself as the one to be worshipped.

Jesus commended the church at Thyatira for their works, faith, service, and perseverance (2:19). He warned

them of the evil woman Jezebel who was seducing them to idolatry and immorality (2:20-23). He challenged the faithful believers to hold fast until he comes (2:24-25). Jesus also promised the faithful believers that they would share in his reign and presence (2:26-29). The lesson leads us to be faithful in spite of what others are doing.

In an age of false religions and false teachers, we must be reminded to watch for the subtle and persuasive power of these false teachers. In chapter 2, verses 24 and 25, the word of God challenges us to a lifestyle of faithful living and awareness of the coming of Jesus. The promise of Jesus to the church at



Blanchard

Thyatira serves as an encouragement by reminding us of the glory of Christian hope. Verses 26-27 discuss the fact that we are reigning with Christ in our missionary efforts to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44). Right now Jesus is the

Lord of Lords and King of Kings. (Revelation 17:14). Christians share that reign with him. The morning star, is no other than Jesus himself. Possessing him, we possess all.

The church at Thyatira had become a hotbed of heresy. The Lord says four things about the false teaching and the false conduct at Thyatira.

First, there was an indulgent permissiveness (2:20a). The church had in its midst a malignant heresy that corrupted all that was good and holy, yet, it was tolerated. We live in a tolerant age where people are

allowed to "do their own thing." The spirit of the age has crept into the church. To denounce a belief as heresy is to be branded intolerant. Certainly, there is no room for bigotry, but to accept anything in the name of Christian charity is a spirit foreign to scripture. The strongest language in the Bible is reserved for those who depart from revealed truth. In the church at Thyatira "that woman Jezebel" was the source of all trouble.

Second, the church at Thyatira was wrong in precept. The Lord said that this Jezebel led his servants astray. She was the source of all heresy and false teaching. It was this same problem that our Lord warned the church at Pergamum to watch for.

Third, the church at Thyatira was wrong in practice. The Lord is saying that the followers of Jezebel were guilty of the gravest sins. They were guilty of sins

against both man and God.

It must be noted that Jesus gave Jezebel and her followers time to repent. This underscores the fact that Jesus is patient with all men (2 Peter 3:9,15). His goodness leads men to repentance. Man must repent or perish eternally.

While we study about Jezebel and the awful sins of her followers, we are reminded to scripturally train our children at home. It is the responsibility of Christian parents to spiritually guide and teach their children. This will lead to our children being strong Christians as adults. The importance of training a child in the way of the Lord cannot be minimized! Our greatest task in life is to bring our children to Jesus and to grow them in the Christian faith. Parents, pray with your children! Read the Bible to them! Be faithful to church!

Blanchard is Director of Missions, Winston Association.

LIFE AND WORK

Jesus' agent

John 16:5-15

By Becky Briscoe Bennett

When faced with the death of a love one, we often respond in a selfish manner. Even though we know death for the Christian means being in the complete presence of God, we selfishly want to keep our loved one tied to this earth. The disciples were no different. Jesus told them he must go to the Father, but they selfishly wanted him to stay.

Representing Christ (16:5-7). Jesus lived with the disciples. They shared experiences both good and bad. The disciples saw his wonderful miracles. Jesus had chosen them

over all others. Times had been difficult but very exciting. In these verses Jesus said good-bye and the disciples did not want to listen. As Jesus explained one more time about his leaving, realization finally set in. Jesus had spoken about his departure before. The disciples selfishly concentrated on what this departure would mean for them. They failed to hear what Jesus said. How often do we listen to Jesus in this way?

Jesus understood their sorrow and he had a solution. He stated it very clearly. If he didn't go, the helper wouldn't



Bennett

come. Jesus made the fact very plain. It would be to their advantage if he went away. The disciples needed to understand their relationship to Jesus was spiritual. As long as Jesus was with them physically, they might never understand the spiritual relationship. It was necessary for Jesus to go.

Jesus' departure was triumph not tragedy. Jesus died so mankind could be redeemed. The task of the Holy Spirit is to apply to our lives the saving work of Jesus. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a reward for Jesus' work. A reward is not given until the task is done. The Spirit is sent to represent Jesus in our life and in the world.

Convicting the World (16:8-11). God chooses to work in this world through us. The Holy Spirit encourages and

helps Christians live in this world. Because the Holy Spirit lives in the hearts of believers, conviction of the world will occur. Sin will be exposed and the world will be called to repentance. Christians are to live in such a way that the world will take notice. The difference between a Christian and the world should be so dramatic anyone could see the contrast. Is your life different from the world? Does your life convict non-believers? The world is wrong about sin and judgement because the world does not believe in Jesus. What message are you sending to the world about sin and judgement?

Guiding Believers (16:12-15). The disciples were in need of spiritual strengthening. Jesus lovingly told them he had much to say, but they could not bear it. How wonderful it is to

know Jesus understands us even when we don't understand ourselves! Jesus tells the disciples not to worry. When things get too tough and seemingly more than we can bear, there is one who can comfort and guide in all truth.

The Spirit speaks with God's authority. While the world is busily engaged in the work of rejecting Christ and persecuting the church, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. The Spirit searches the depths of God. He comprehends and reveals God to Christians. The Spirit does not drive Christians; he leads us. Our task is to follow. As Christians we must daily seek to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives. This is one way we can show Christ to a rejecting and persecuting world.

Bennett is Dean of Students at Blue Mountain College.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God chooses to save

Exodus 6:2-9

By Greg McBride

In God's covenant with Abraham, God prophesied that Abraham's descendants would be enslaved and oppressed in a strange land for four hundred years. Afterward God would bring them out and give them many possessions (15:13-14). Today's lesson focuses on this promise of deliverance and its fulfillment under Moses.

God and the Past (6:2-4). Many years had passed when God sent Moses to deliver the people from their Egyptian bondage. The Israelites, concerning whom Moses addressed the Pharaoh, had all been born in slavery. They had only heard stories about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, and these stories were in sharp contrast to their present oppression under the Egyptians. In light of these circumstances, God revealed to Moses his name—Jehovah—and identified himself as the God whom their father's knew as El Shaddai (God Almighty). In giving his name God established an intimate relationship with the people in bondage. By identifying himself as God Almighty, God reminded the Israelites of the promises of the past. These promises were now their promises and God intended to keep them. Though we are not to live in the past, we are to constantly bring to mind God's promises in the past. In those



McBride

promises, God is still at work.

God and the Present (6:5). "Furthermore" God continued, "I have heard your cries . . . And have remembered my covenant." The verbs "have heard" and "have remembered" are in the perfect state in the Hebrew. That means the action indicated by them is completed already. Jehovah thus wanted the people to know he was aware of their present circumstances and was doing something about them. Though their lot seemed hopeless, God was bringing them hope.

Throughout our lives we too sometimes find ourselves in "hopeless" situations. God's word to us in these situations is "I am aware, and I am at work." We must learn to trust God and wait on him in the present, even when doing so includes discomfort.

God and the Future (6:6-8).

Note carefully what God told Moses he intended to do next for the people of Israel. He would deliver them with a mighty arm, take them for his people, be their God, and give them the land he promised their fathers. God's future for his people included more than just relief from their suffering. Our God desires more than just deliverance "from" something. Rather, God desires to deliver his people "to" an abundant life of blessing. Paul put the same truth this way: "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think..." (Eph. 3:20). What a glorious future lies ahead for those who trust in the Lord.

God's Offer Unheard (6:9). After receiving these words from God, Moses relayed them to the people of Israel. Instead of excitement and jubilation at the news, the people refused to listen to Moses. We must be careful not to see this as willful

disobedience on the part of the Israelites, for the Bible gives the reason for this reaction. It was because of their weakened spirit and cruel bondage. The people saw no chance of escape. Thus they had given up hope.

Crises in our lives at times make it difficult for us to respond to God's good news. Yet, times of crises afford the best opportunity for God's deliverance to come in our lives. Divine deliverance comes when all hope of human escape is gone. As was the case for the two previous lessons in this unit, this story of deliverance focuses on God's self-revelation. Here God reveals himself as Savior to his people. We should pay close attention to this insight into the nature of God. Jehovah, who delivered his people from bondage in Egypt, is more than able and willing to save each of us from the bondage of sin.

McBride is pastor, Kittiwake Church, Pass Christian.

THE VILLAGE VIEW

The Baptist Children's Village



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive
Director
P.O. Box 27,
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
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ACCREDITED



Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

**JAN. 1, 1997-
JAN 31, 1997**

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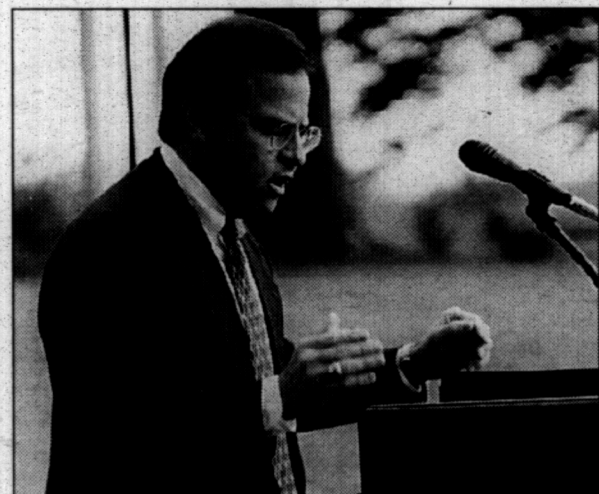
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Congratulations, Rebecca Williams! New WMU State President. Rebecca has also served as President of our BCV Board of Trustees. We wish you the best, Rebecca.



BCV Annual Community Easter Sunrise Service was an inspirational beginning to a beautiful Easter. Dr. David Mitchell, pastor of Van Winkle Baptist Church, Jackson, delivered an encouraging message. The congregation was blessed with music by Morrison Heights Baptist Church, Trinity. We look forward to Easter Sunrise 1998!



Rusty McKee receives 5-year service pin from supervisor, Mike Crocker. Rusty is a child care worker on our Dickerson Place Campus in Brookhaven. Keep up the good work, Rusty!



"Trinity," Morrison Heights Baptist Church; (from left) Sid Tadlock; Karen Hardy, Associate Music Minister; and Randy McCoy

TOUR DATES

The Baptist Children's Village
will conduct tours of statewide campuses on the following dates:

Farrow Manor Campus, Independence
and
**Reedy Acres Campus,
Water Valley**

Thursday, April 24, 1997
and
Saturday, April 26, 1997

Tentative Schedule

7:00 a.m. Meet at India Nunnery Campus for Continental Breakfast
8:00 a.m. Depart for Farrow Manor Campus
11:30 a.m. Tour and Lunch at Farrow Manor
1:30 p.m. Depart for Reedy Acres
2:45 p.m. Tour and Coffee at Reedy Acres
3:30 p.m. Depart for Return to India Nunnery Campus
6:00 p.m. Arrive India Nunnery Campus

For reservations call Chrystelle Thames at (601) 922-2242 or send:

Name _____

Group _____

Expected in Group _____

Telephone _____

mail to: Chrystelle Thames, The Baptist Children's Village,
P.O. Box 27, Clinton, MS 39060-0027

****NOTE--If you would rather meet us at another campus for tours, let us know.

Analysis: Must Muslim converts stand, fall alone?

By Erich Bridges
SBC Foreign Mission Board

You can find the missing PEACE

The Prince of Peace extends a wonderful invitation to you.

1. His love gives us peace.

This is his promise:

"Perfect love casts out fear."
(1 John 4:18) When we ask Christ into our lives, his love chases away fear.

2. His promise of eternal life gives us peace.

The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life." (Romans 6:23) God provides eternal life through the death and resurrection of his Son.

3. His promise to walk with us through life gives us peace.

Jesus said, "In me you may have peace. In this world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Jesus extends his promise of peace to us, but we must respond by accepting him as the missing piece in our lives.

You can make that commitment today by, (1) admitting you need God, (2) confessing your sins to him, and (3) by faith, receiving Christ as Lord.

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Mississippi Baptist Church for spiritual guidance.

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Much is being reported in missions circles these days about a great turning to Christ in parts of the Muslim world.

We hear stories of Jesus appearing to Muslims in dreams and visions, of thousands of Muslim listeners responding to Christian radio programs, of new converts standing true to their faith in the face of persecution or death.

Such things are happening. Prayer warriors, Christian broadcasting and new mission strategies are reaching into the heart of Islam as never before.

After the visions and miraculous conversions, how are new believers being discipled and brought into Christian churches?

In many cases, they aren't.

That's the sobering assessment of one Foreign Mission Board missionary.

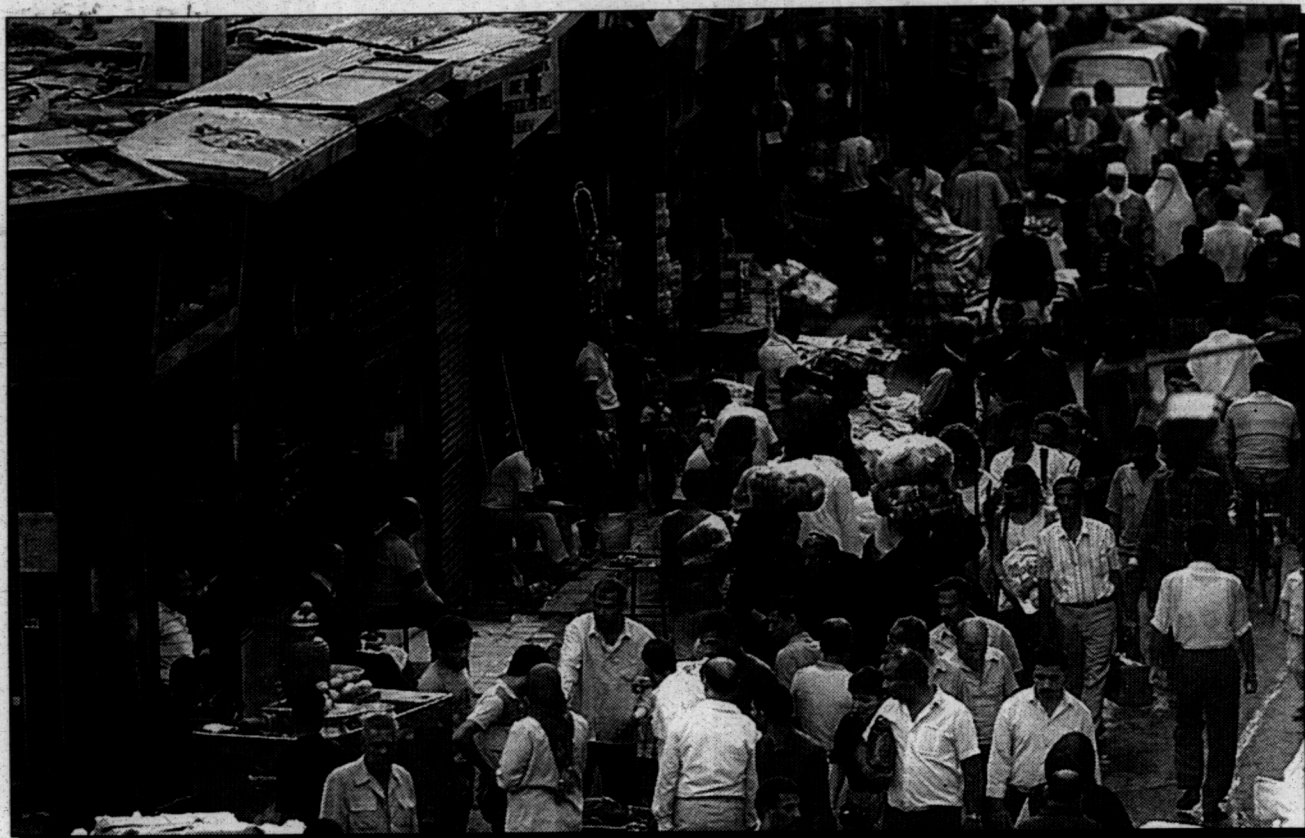
"They're alone," the missionary said of many Muslim converts to Christianity.

"They don't have fellowship with other believers. Some say 90% of the Muslim converts in the Middle East have reverted to Islam — if not to agnosticism — within the first year after they decide to follow Christ.

"Most of the loss comes because they see no role models of a mature Muslim Christian. As a result they're scattered and so they fall away," he said.

Sadly, some Muslim Arab converts find a cold reception when they do come to churches of the historically Christian groups in the Mideast.

"They are not welcome except one at a time, occasionally, and then only if they learn



ALONE IN A CROWD — What chance does a Muslim convert to Christianity in this Egyptian market — or countless other places in the Middle East — have to be spiritually nurtured? Not much, says a Southern Baptist missionary. "They're alone," the missionary reports. Up to 90 percent of new Muslim converts to Christ revert to Islam within a year, according to some estimates. That can change if Christians overcome cultural barriers and make contact with new believers before they fall by the wayside. (BP Photo by Joanna Pinneo)

the Christian lingo," the missionary observed.

Discipleship of Muslim converts, when it occurs at all, usually is conducted quietly, one on one, by Christians who manage to overcome cultural barriers and make contact with new believers before they fall by the wayside.

Yet out of these unseen relationships will emerge a truly indigenous church, the missionary believes.

It will be composed of people "attempting to be true to their culture and to Jesus Christ — not compromising their Christian faith, but not throwing away their Muslim culture in order to embrace a Western Christianity," he said.

The missionary has a vision — or multiplicity of visions — of what it will take for Christians to break through the isolation and reach the countless Muslim villages of the Middle East.

— "It will take targeted and specific prayer for village chiefs, sheiks, and religious mullahs on a village-by-village, province-by-province basis.

— "It will take radio broadcasts not coming in at 1 a.m. but when people are awake and can listen.

"It will take traveling film teams showing Christian films. It will take picture books, picture Bibles, flannel graphs, and cartoon books done in a simple way that can be understood by uneducated people.

— "It will take Christian rural medical teams, irrigation specialists, agriculturists, sociologists, rural development people, and anthropologists living among them.

— "It will take believing Arabs

who travel from place to place, just telling people about Jesus.

"We can't keep Christianity locked up in a church or in a dry, sterile medium.

"Muslims want things that are fun and interesting just like the rest of us. Why not?" he asked.

Why not, indeed.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

I received several responses to my request for feedback on the topic of sexual desires after divorce or death of a spouse. There were many good suggestions, such as:

— Stay immersed in Scripture.

— Flee temptation.

— Develop discipline to control what is observed and experienced in the secular world (television, movies, alcohol, etc.)

Among the responses I received was the following letter. While the writer doesn't fit exactly into one of the categories previously mentioned, I believe her story bears reading because I strongly recommend Christian counseling for those who find themselves in this or similar situations. My thanks to all of you for taking time to write and encourage others.

I am neither widowed nor divorced, but there has been no sex in my life for the last ten years of my 40-year marriage. My husband became involved with a girl the age of our daughter who he met on his citizens band radio. When

I broke it up, my husband became furious. He vowed I'd pay, and he made our sexual encounters few and far between. At first I was bitter and frustrated, and I told him the Lord would "fix" him so he couldn't give to another woman what was rightfully mine. He has been impotent for ten years, but now he's meeting women on his computer. I am in my early 60's and I still have sexual desires, but I try not to think about it. I stay busy. I never thought of straying because I was taught marriage vows are sacred. I have numerous hobbies. I'm active in my Sunday School class; without those ladies I couldn't get by. Why don't I leave this loveless marriage? I am living on hope that someday he will forgive what I said and turn back to me in our marriage bed. I doubt it, because he is a stubborn, self-centered person who "never makes a mistake." I pray every day that the Lord will change his heart.

Maybe someday.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Bibliocipher

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RED TE W KEH UZD-
GLOTZ XZK, ED MET?
ED TE W GZZC SE
UPZOGZ XZK? RED
WR W IZS UPZOGZT
XZK, W GNELPT KES
FZ SNZ GZDAOKS ER
JNDWGS.

MOPOSWOKG EKZ: SZK

Clue: I equals Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Revelation Two Seven.